



# If I Should Die...



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## Chapter 1 by Monica

Unsurprisingly, Purgatory is composed of three elements: depression, angst, and boredom. I had been here for years and had fallen easily into the flow of things. It's not hard when you're the only one in what I "affectionately" call my own personal Hell. How did I end up here? When I was alive, I wasn't a bad person--but I definitely made the wrong choices. When that happens, God doesn't really want you, but neither does good ol' Lucifer on account of how your moral compass pointed northeast, and not strictly north or south. My existence was a little skewed, sure; but I'd rather go back to that life than to have been stuck in Purgatory.

At any rate, my "realm" was Saint Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital in New York City, or Saint Luke's Hospital as everyone called it. I died in the O.R. at nineteen after getting mixed up in some gang-related activity; I was shot in the head, and the trip to the hospital was useless considering how I was pretty much dead when I got there. I'm technically forty-five now, but for all intents and purposes, I'm forever nineteen. So I was stuck amongst the sick and injured for all eternity, my black stilettos clicking down the hall, unheard by all except me, which is almost as fun as it sounds. I hoped and prayed that one day someone would join me, but apparently, at Saint Luke's, you're either a Saint, or a hardcore sinner; I was the exception I guess. I spent most of my time in the chemotherapy ward. People were a lot more interesting there. They wrote books, they told stories, they laughed, they cried; the atmosphere was too dynamic for me to stay away. People were wheeled in and out of there every day. It's not that I wasn't sorry that this was happening to these people, it's just that I liked hearing people's stories. I could sit amongst the family when they shared final thoughts and memories, and no one could tell me to leave. But there was one patient that came in on a relatively slow day in December. He was different. He

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"But you're too young to talk like that!" his mother would scream. He'd try comforting her, but she'd only get angry and storm out. I would sit in the window and look at him. His name was Ryder. On occasion, he would look over at where I was standing, but I would look back at him, knowing he couldn't see me. He'd turn his head, and I'd walk away. But that day, that one fateful day, was different. After his mother had stormed off again and the doctors left him to his own, I sat in the window.

"God," he exclaimed. "Would you stop staring at me and just come in already?" I looked around, confused. "Yes, you," he confirmed. If it were possible for the dead to have a heart attack, I would've right then.

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